

# OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENT

As mandated in Assembly Bill 925 (effective January 1, 2003), the California Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (Governor's Committee) shall consult with and advise the Labor and Workforce Development Agency and the California Health and Human Services Agency on all issues related to full inclusion in the workforce of people with disabilities, including the development of a sustainable, comprehensive strategy to do the following:

- Bring adults with disabilities into gainful employment at a rate that is as close as possible to that of the general adult population.
- Support the goals of equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for these individuals.
- Ensure that State government is a model employer of individuals with disabilities.
- Support State coordination with, and participation in, benefits planning training and information dissemination projects supported by private foundations and federal grants.

A Draft California Comprehensive Strategy was presented to the Governor's Committee Employment, Planning and Coordination Subcommittee during their March 29, 2005, meeting. In an effort to be inclusive, the Governor's Committee in cooperation with the California Health Incentives Improvement Project is accepting comments from stakeholders to provide input.

Please identify the category or section, and paragraph where input is being given for comments to be properly addressed. Also identify which constituency group you represent, e.g., local area, education, community-based organization, business, etc.

The deadline for initial input is June 15, 2005. All comments will be compiled for consideration to the draft Comprehensive Strategy, which will be submitted to the Governor's Committee at their Quarterly Meeting in July. After their review it will be posted on the web site once again for further input.

This strategy will be submitted to the secretaries of the Health and Human Services Agency and the Labor and Workforce Development Agency for review and approval. The final strategy will be the blueprint for our implementation plan to bring adults with disabilities into gainful employment.

You may e-mail your input to [one-stop@edd.ca.gov](mailto:one-stop@edd.ca.gov) or send written comments to:

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Please check the [Resources for People with Disabilities](#) web page periodically for information on upcoming stakeholder forums for providing in-person input.

If you have further questions, you may call (916) 654-8055, (800) 695-0350 voice or (916) 654-9820, TTY.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this opportunity.

# CALIFORNIA COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

## Assumptions

1. The comprehensive strategy is a flexible framework; it will evolve.
2. The results of the implementation of the comprehensive strategy must be measurable and sustainable.

## Why California Needs a Comprehensive Strategy

Traditionally, policies related to people with disabilities were designed to provide support and/or assistance. This resulted in dependence on income supports and barriers to employment and economic self-sufficiency. Over the past three or four decades, federal and State legislation has shifted from a medical model to one of emerging disability public policy, promoting civil rights and independent living.

According to data available from the 2000 U.S. Census, California had 19.2 million working age adults. Twenty percent of this population, or 3.8 million, report having a disability. By the year 2020, California's population is anticipated to reach 45 million, and it is realistic to assume, at minimum, that the State will experience a proportional increase in the number of people with disabilities.

The increase in population, however, will not ameliorate the existing and future anticipated shortage of an educated, skilled labor force crucial for economic development and prosperity.

The complexity of coordinating programs administered at State and local levels requires a comprehensive flexible framework that is clearly and universally articulated. California must use a comprehensive strategy across multiple employment, healthcare and support services to impact employment outcomes for people with disabilities, especially as we acknowledge the continuum and diversity of disability in our society.

The State of California's comprehensive strategy will:

- Support the goals of equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities which will bring adults with disabilities into gainful employment at a rate that is as close as possible to that of the general adult population;
- Ensure that State government is a model employer of persons with disabilities; and
- Support State coordination with, and participation in, benefits planning training and information dissemination projects supported by private foundations and federal grants.

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## **Our Vision**

The State of California commits to achieving an employment rate for people with disabilities at a rate that is as close as possible to that of the general population by:

- removing barriers to work, and
- providing needed support and incentives to maximize economic growth and development.

To promote California's economic growth, the State of California will provide comprehensive and integrated services that lead to meaningful and economic independence for persons with disabilities.

## **What We Believe**

- All Californian's, who are capable of working, including people with disabilities, shall have the opportunity and responsibility to be employed.
- The integrated system needs continuous improvement to serve the changing needs of all Californians.
- In order to achieve these goals, Californian's with disabilities, their families, employers, service providers, education providers and social service providers will come together to design an integrated service system.
- Education, employment and social service providers will coordinate service delivery, incorporating each other's cultures.

## **Final Standards of Expectation**

Californians with disabilities will have access to an interdependent State/local infrastructure designed to improve and maintain their quality of life. Through a range of services and supports, independent living and equal access to employment, the unemployment rate of people with disabilities will be at a rate that is as close as possible to that of the general population.

To accommodate local needs and mindful of the fiscal constraints of the diverse stakeholders, this section will be expanded through stakeholder input.

# CALIFORNIA COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

## Guiding Principles

- **People with disabilities are part of the workforce** – enjoying equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency.
- **People with disabilities participate in all economic and workforce activities** - employment as the economic and social goal of people with disabilities is of benefit to the individual, the community, and the economy.
- **Programs and services respond to the needs of the worker as well as the employer** – public policy at the federal, State and local levels must be coordinated to provide incentives, and decrease disincentives, to employment for individuals with disabilities and employers.
- **Workforce development and workforce participation are interdependent** –Workforce development addresses the needs and interests of the worker, the employer, and the community. Workforce participation is viewed as a realistic and preferred goal for people with disabilities. Disability service organizations participate in the new employment culture that supports the primary relationship between the employer and the employee with the disability.
- **Seamless, un-interrupted** access to public and private health care enhances the ability to work.

## Environmental Assessment

### **Current Strengths**

- Assembly Bill (AB) 925, the Workforce Inclusion Act:
  - ❖ Established the California Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities as the forum through which stakeholders can develop a comprehensive strategy that will result in increased employment rates for people with disabilities.
  - ❖ Reinforces the goals of the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 by:
    - Streamlining and integrating services; universal access to programs and services; customer choice of employment and training programs.

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- Providing customer choice in obtaining rehabilitation and vocational services; opportunities to participate in the workforce with less dependence on public benefits.

- California legislation/initiatives.

- ❖ AB 155, 1999, Medi-Cal Working Disabled Program.

- ❖ Proposition 63, 2004, Mental Health Services Expansion.

## Areas that Need Improvement

- California's service delivery system has:
  - ❖ Multiple funding streams.
  - ❖ Conflicting rules and regulations.
- Statistics defining the employment status of Californians with disabilities are inconsistent. Definitions for disability and work limitations, different survey questions, inconsistent methodologies, and self-reported information contribute to discrepancies in disability numbers.
- There is difficulty navigating the complex work incentive and healthcare benefit programs by both the consumer and service providers, because of complicated state and federal program requirements. As a result, access to employment and training programs is limited.
- Limited outreach to the employer community to increase awareness of qualified job applicants.
- Increase outreach to ethnic communities.

## Opportunities

- An emerging paradigm that recognizes self-sufficiency through employment is preferable to dependency on income support programs.
- California has several state and federal funded projects targeting:
  - ❖ Full integration of people with disabilities into all aspects of life.
  - ❖ Educational and employment opportunities.
  - ❖ Access to assistive and universally designed technologies.

# CALIFORNIA COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

- ❖ Accessible transportation and housing options for people with disabilities.
- H.R. 1350, 2004 reauthorizes the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). The IDEA Act of 2004:
  - ❖ Improves accountability for educating students with disabilities.
  - ❖ Expands services to students with disabilities.
  - ❖ Increases transition services for students leaving school.
  - ❖ Provides earlier access to services and supports.
  - ❖ Reforms special education finance and funding and increases local flexibility.
- Public Law 106-170, the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 is designed to enhance the range of choices available to Social Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries in finding, entering, and retaining self-supporting employment by:
  - ❖ Increasing beneficiary choice in obtaining rehabilitation and vocational services to help them go to work and attain their employment goals.
  - ❖ Removing barriers that require people with disabilities to choose between health care coverage and work.
  - ❖ Assuring that more people with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in the workforce and lessen their dependence on public benefits.
  - ❖ Supporting activities of California's thirteen SSA-direct funded, Benefits, Planning, Assistance and Outreach (BPAO) grantees providing benefits counseling through California Independent Living Centers (ILCs) and other community-based organizations. (See DB 101 Benefits Planner registry, [www.db101.org](http://www.db101.org))
- H.R. 27, the Job Training Improvement Act of 2005 (pending in Congress) amends the Workforce Investment Act to include an additional purpose particularly relevant to people with disabilities by providing workforce investment activities that promotes informed choices and actively involves participants in decisions that affect their participation in such activities.

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## **Barriers to Successful Employment**

- Misconceptions:
  - ❖ Attitudinal barriers – Beliefs and sentiments about people with disabilities.
  - ❖ Institutional barriers - Policies, practices, and procedures adopted by employers, businesses, and public agencies.
- The system has been structured to foster disincentives.
  - ❖ Fear of losing benefits.
- Federal and state program performance measures.
- Cuts in federal and state funding.
  - ❖ Less money for supportive services and benefits.
  - ❖ Increased competition for limited funds.
- Restrictive use of multiple funding streams.
- Increased demand, fewer resources.

## **Where We Intend To Be**

### **Goal #1**

The California Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities will coordinate and provide leadership, and serve as the hub for coordinated policy formation and employment strategies.

### **Objectives**

- Build a seamless, cohesive delivery system by engaging State and local stakeholders, employers and disability communities in the policy development process.
- Bring all partners at the State level, including education (K-12 and community colleges), to the table to design a unified system between benefit supports and the workforce development system.



# CALIFORNIA COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

## Goal #2

California's employers recognize that business success relies on the diverse talents of the workforce, including workers with disabilities and will provide leadership in expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

### Objectives

- Engage the business community in promoting and implementing solutions to increase employment opportunities for Californians with disabilities.

## Goal #3

Link workforce preparation (including education), workforce development, health care, and social support systems to serve all people including people with disabilities.

### Objectives

- The system will have the capacity to serve all people.
- Employ connecting policies and activities to address needs related to healthcare policies and programs, transportation, housing, assistive technology, benefits planning, financial literacy and asset building.
- Increase stakeholder knowledge through cross agency and consumer training.

## Goal #4

Youth with disabilities will receive appropriate supports and resources to complete their education and transition to employment and self-sufficiency.

### Objectives

- Improve accountability for educating students with disabilities.
- Expand services to students with disabilities.
- Increase transition services for students leaving school.
- Analyze and recommend to include benefits planning as a required or available service component of a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

# CALIFORNIA COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

## Goal #5

California will have a well-prepared workforce in which people with disabilities have proportional representation.

### Objectives

- Increase customer/consumer choice in obtaining rehabilitation and vocational services to help them go to work and attain their employment goals.
- Analyze and remove barriers that require people with disabilities to choose between health care coverage and work.
- Assure that more people with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in the workforce and lessen their dependence on public benefits.
- Increase local capacities for one-on-one benefits planning services including private sector capacities such as Human Resource departments.

## Goal #6

Promote a new employment culture in which disability and support service organizations encourage people with disabilities to seek work and support the primary relationship is between the employer and the job seeker.

### Objectives

This section will be expanded through stakeholder input.

## Goal #7

California's administration will lead by example by being a model employer of people with disabilities.

### Objectives

This section will be expanded through stakeholder input.

## Goal #8

Full partnership with community-based organizations in One-Stop Career Centers.

# CALIFORNIA COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

## Objectives

- Bring disability expertise to strengthen the ability of One-Stop Career Centers to meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- Provide support to the State Workforce Investment Board and local One-Stop Career Centers to promote universal access to achieve full compliance with State and federal laws.

## Goal #9

Analyze data to assist in formulating policy recommendations.

## Objectives

- Promote an integrated management information system to provide consistent data.

## Evaluation

Measurable outcomes should use data from federal, state, and private sources and resources including foundations.

## Sustainability

Responsibility for review of system performance as well as recommendation for improvement through amendment of the state strategy should be lodged in a statewide body with representatives from all affected groups and entities.